Federal Grant Program Spending:

Rhode Island

1981 - 1988

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Grants-in-aid to state and local governments constitute one of the four major federal spending categories. (The other three are procurement, salaries and wages, and direct payments to individuals.) Rhode Island's share of the total amount of federal grants to state and local governments rose from 0.52 percent to 0.59 percent between fiscal 1981 to fiscal 1988. Two criteria often are used to compare states' performance in receipts of grant funds: relative tax burden and population. Rhode Island's tax burden--its payment of federal revenues--increased from 0.41 percent to 0.43 percent during this period, while its population fell from 0.41 to 0.40. Figure 1 compares Rhode Island's population and tax burden to its receipt of grants in all federal programs and the 60 largest programs.

A recent report published by the Northeast-Midwest Institute, Federal Funding Formulas and State Allocations: What Share for the Northeast and Midwest? examines 56 programs that awarded grants over $100 million in fiscal 1981, plus four others that reached $100 million by fiscal 1988. Grants to Rhode Island in these programs increased in nominal dollars from $415 million (0.57 percent of the total) to $504 million (0.57 percent) during the period studied. Table 1 presents the amount Rhode Island received in these 60 programs and its share relative to other states. The programs are listed in descending order of dollar amounts awarded in fiscal 1981 (or the first year of program operation). Awards in the "first" year are compared to those in the "last" year--the latest fiscal year for which state-by-state allocations are available from government agencies; years range from fiscal 1987 to fiscal 1990. Table 2 presents similar information in 1982 (real) dollars. It shows that Rhode Island suffered a 5.5 percent loss, from $432.9 million to $409.0 million, while nationally the buying power of grants declined 4.6 percent.

The state's receipts fell in real dollars for about two-thirds of the grant programs. Rhode Island registered some gains in: Medicaid; Highway Planning and Construction: Interstate Substitution; the Interstate 4R program; Aid to Families with Dependent Children; and the Educationally Deprived Children program. These increases offset losses in other programs, especially in Interstate Construction, Construction Grants for Wastewater Treatment, and Community Development Block Grants for large cities. Rhode Island's share of funding rose in several programs: Interstate Substitution, Water and Waste Disposal, and Construction Grants for Wastewater Treatment. The state also benefited from large increases nationally in programs such as Medicaid and Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

Programs Gaining the Most in Funding for Rhode Island

	Difference in State's Share First to Last Year (in percent)	Change in Millions of Nominal Dollars	Change in Millions of Real Dollars
1. Medicaid	-0.01	80.88	40.15
2. Interstate Substitution	6.63	44.47	33.10
3. Interstate 4R	0.00	8.82	6.12
4. AFDC	-0.13	5.61	5.71
5. Ed. Deprived Children	0.03	5.23	1.82

Programs Losing the Most in Funding for Rhode Island

	Difference in State's Share First to Last Year (in percent)	Change in Millions of Nominal Dollars	Change in Millions of Real Dollars
1. Interstate Construction	-0.59	-30.11	-33.22
2. Const. Grants (wastewater)	0.19	-6.47	-10.18
3. CDBG: Large Cities	0.01	-3.45	-6.09
4. JTPA IIA	-0.17	-3.34	-3.68
5. LIHEAP	0.001	-2.57	-5.23

Programs in which Rhode Island's Share Increased the Most

	Share First Year	Share Last Year	Difference	Change	Difference in Millions of Nominal Dollars
	(in percent)				
1. Interstate Sub.	2.93	9.56	6.63	226.41	44.47
2. Water & Waste Disp.	0.16	0.39	0.24	150.38	0.09
3. Const. Grants	0.50	0.69	0.19	38.41	-6.47
4. Refugee Assistance	0.44	0.60	0.16	36.10	0.14
5. Foster Care	0.30	0.41	0.11	37.20	2.03

Programs in which Rhode Island's Share Decreased the Most

	Share First Year	Share Last Year	Difference	Change	Difference in Millions of Nominal Dollars
			(in percent)		
1. Interstate Const.	1.17	0.57	-0.59	-50.95	-30.11
2. UMTA: Small Cities	0.66	0.27	-0.39	-58.82	-0.64
3. Bridge Rep./Reh.	0.61	0.25	-0.36	-58.83	-2.20
4. Comm. Ser. Block Grant	0.90	0.61	-0.29	-32.42	1.19
5. Airport Imp: Primary	0.40	0.13	-0.27	-66.87	0.29

With politicians reluctant to consider tax increases or entitlement and military reductions, competition for domestic discretionary program funds--social and economic development initiatives of interest to states and communities--has become fierce. Recent decisions made by Congress and the administration--bailing out insolvent savings and loan institutions, cleaning up the Department of Energy's nuclear facilities, promoting NASA's $30-billion space station, and building the superconducting supercollider--will divert many of these scarce federal dollars away from Rhode Island and toward states in the South and West. Rhode Island taxpayers, for example, will pay an estimated $110 million for the 1988 savings and loan bail-out actions, although none of the state's institutions failed.

Two factors will continue to affect Rhode Island's receipt of grant program funds: increases or cuts in overall appropriations, and gains or losses in the state's share of total funds allocated. The 1990 census may well hurt Rhode Island on both of these factors. The Northeast-Midwest region probably will lose 14 seats in the House of Representatives. This loss of political influence will diminish the ability of members from these states to set funding priorities and to defend programs of particular benefit to the region from spending cuts.

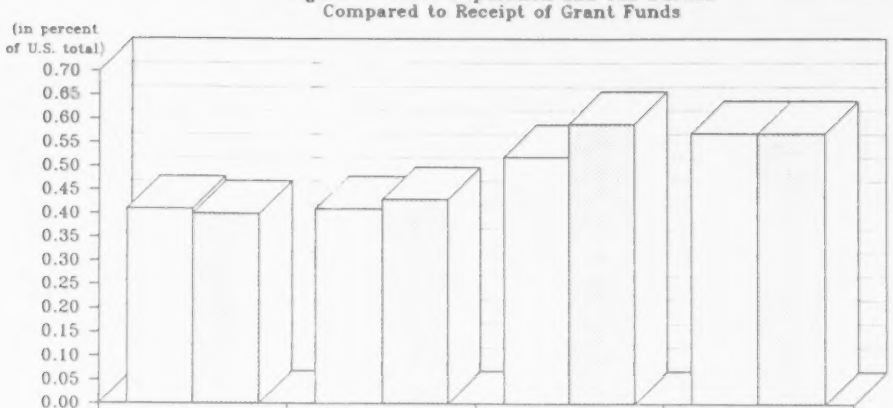
In addition, funds for 39 of the 60 major grant programs studied are allocated in part on the basis of population. Some formulas consider the entire population while others target specific sectors, such as school-age children, older Americans, the unemployed, or those living in poverty. In some cases, grant programs use annual population estimates to adjust the allocations. In those cases, estimated population losses account for some of the observed decline in Rhode Island's share of funding for these programs. Twenty major programs, however, use decennial census population factors in their formulas. Because Rhode Island has not kept pace with the national growth in population, falling from 0.41 percent in 1981 to an estimated 0.40 percent by 1990, the state can expect that use of the 1990 census numbers, starting in 1992, will reduce its receipt of funds.

Many grant formulas work against the interests of Rhode Island and other states in the Northeast-Midwest region by underestimating the need for federal assistance, overestimating fiscal (tax-raising) capacity, and underestimating the costs of service responsibilities. For lawmakers interested in promoting

more equitable patterns of funding, many opportunities exist to target federal grants more precisely to the people and places in greatest need. Many grant formulas were fashioned years ago when Congress was less concerned with budget deficits. As a result, formulas frequently contain crude and inaccurate factors approximating states' needs and their ability to meet those needs. Congress can correct these distortions when it reauthorizes the grant programs.

Rhode Island

Figure 1. State Population and Tax Burden Compared to Receipt of Grant Funds



	Population	Tax Burden	All Grants	Top 60 Grants
1981	0.41	0.41	0.52	0.57
1988	0.40	0.43	0.59	0.57

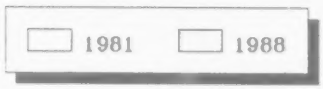
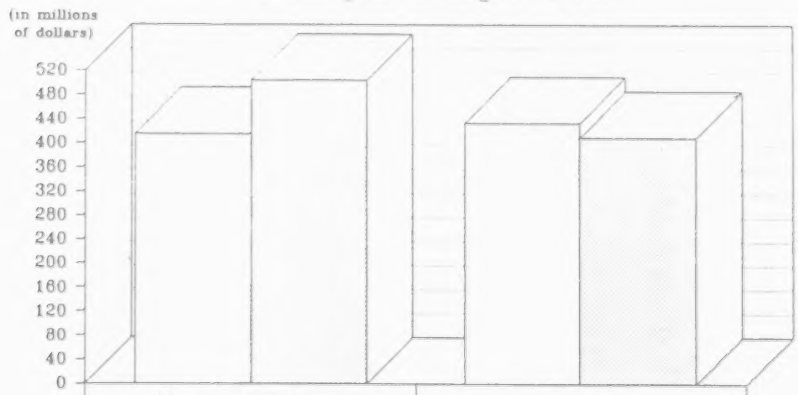


Figure 2. Total State Federal Funding for 60 Largest Grants



	Nominal Dollars	Real Dollars
First Year	415.02	432.91
Last Year	504.22	409

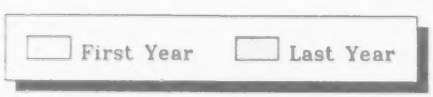


Table 1

Total Awards, Rhode Island's Share of the Total, Funds Received, and Changes in Funding in 60 Largest Grant Programs

Program Name	Total Funds First Year	Total Funds Last Year	State Share First Year	State Share Last Year	Difference in Share	Change in Share	State Award First Year	State Award Last Year	Change First to Last Year
	(in millions of nominal dollars)		(in percent)				(in millions of nominal dollars)		
Medicaid	17,382.07	30,396.40	0.64	0.63	-0.01	-0.93	110.41	191.29	80.88
AFDC	6,938.72	9,987.67	0.62	0.49	-0.13	-21.52	43.27	48.88	5.61
General Revenue	5,133.68	--	0.44	0.00	-0.44	-100.00	22.65	0.00	-22.65
Const. Grants	3,833.59	1,833.00	0.50	0.69	0.19	38.41	19.13	12.66	-6.47
Interstate Const.	3,768.10	2,421.50	1.17	0.57	-0.59	-50.95	43.97	13.86	-30.11
Ed. Depr. Child	2,950.50	4,138.90	0.35	0.38	0.03	7.17	10.39	15.62	5.23
CDBG: Large	2,604.66	1,920.62	0.52	0.53	0.01	1.39	13.67	10.22	-3.45
S.S. Block Grnt	2,489.62	2,684.53	0.48	0.40	-0.08	-16.25	11.97	10.81	-1.16
School Lunch	2,294.74	2,686.53	0.35	0.27	-0.08	-23.65	8.01	7.16	-0.85
JTPA II-A	1,820.77	1,705.52	0.43	0.26	-0.17	-38.96	7.80	4.46	-3.34
LIHEAP	1,744.17	1,381.09	0.69	0.69	0.00	-0.51	12.11	9.54	-2.57
Primary System	1,620.38	2,274.79	0.50	0.50	0.00	-0.89	8.15	11.34	3.19
UMTA: Large	1,283.77	1,433.00	0.63	0.63	0.01	0.83	8.05	9.06	1.01
Bridge Rep. Reh.	925.14	1,368.91	0.61	0.25	-0.36	-58.83	5.63	3.43	-2.20
WIC	905.87	1,703.44	0.63	0.45	-0.18	-28.94	5.71	7.63	1.92
Food Dist.: Child	901.14	873.51	0.32	0.26	-0.06	-18.97	2.89	2.27	-0.62
CDBG: Small	880.85	798.65	0.47	0.43	-0.04	-7.64	4.12	3.45	-0.67
Ed. of Hand	856.61	1,387.90	0.41	0.45	0.05	11.56	3.48	6.29	2.81
Rehab. services	833.41	1,251.79	0.44	0.40	-0.04	-8.48	3.63	4.99	1.36
Interstate 4R	780.06	2,532.12	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.48	3.90	12.72	8.82
JTPA IIB	777.29	673.89	0.54	0.32	-0.22	-39.99	4.19	2.18	-2.01
Urban System	772.60	722.51	0.55	0.51	-0.04	-7.91	4.25	3.66	-0.59
Emp. Ser. Admin	718.09	737.51	0.42	0.36	-0.06	-13.99	3.00	2.65	-0.35
UnEm Ins	686.61	1,407.97	0.79	0.62	-0.16	-20.62	5.40	8.79	3.39
Head Start	684.58	1,059.52	0.38	0.36	-0.01	-3.58	2.58	3.85	1.27
Voc Ed	672.99	793.16	0.44	0.51	0.07	16.20	2.95	4.04	1.09
School Assist	622.66	639.08	0.41	0.44	0.03	8.21	2.53	2.81	0.28
Rural Secondary	580.50	581.08	0.50	0.50	0.00	-0.10	2.93	2.93	0.00
Improv School P	437.72	464.75	0.51	0.51	0.00	0.10	2.23	2.37	0.14
Alco,Drug, MH	420.18	478.52	0.95	0.92	-0.03	-2.97	4.00	4.42	0.42
Child Support Enf	393.13	741.65	0.30	0.34	0.03	10.91	1.19	2.49	1.30

Table 1
Total Awards, Rhode Island's Share of the Total, Funds Received,
and Changes in Funding in 60 Largest Grant Programs (continued)

Program Name	Total Funds First Year	Total Funds Last Year	State Share First Year	State Share Last Year	Difference in Share	Change in Share	State Award First Year	State Award Last Year	Change First to Last Year
	(in millions of nominal dollars)		(in percent)				(in millions of nominal dollars)		
Refugee Assist	363.43	290.26	0.44	0.60	0.16	36.10	1.61	1.75	0.14
UDAG	356.22	188.19	0.07	0.01	-0.06	-92.43	0.25	0.01	-0.24
Maternal Child Healt	350.26	448.30	0.33	0.33	0.00	0.06	1.14	1.46	0.32
Win	347.90	91.80	0.59	0.58	-0.01	-1.54	2.04	0.53	-1.51
Older Am: Nutr	341.97	426.53	0.51	0.53	0.02	4.46	1.75	2.28	0.53
School Break	315.06	427.16	0.22	0.19	-0.03	-15.71	0.70	0.80	0.10
Foster care	308.75	716.25	0.30	0.41	0.11	37.20	0.93	2.96	2.03
Child Care Food	292.02	479.03	0.42	0.28	-0.15	-35.11	1.24	1.32	0.08
Senior Com. Ser	271.93	324.51	0.54	0.53	-0.01	-1.28	1.46	1.72	0.26
Interstate Sub	256.20	543.89	2.93	9.56	6.63	226.41	7.50	51.97	44.47
Migrant Ed	256.05	258.46	0.01	0.05	0.04	543.94	0.02	0.13	0.11
Older Am Support	246.04	271.30	0.51	0.53	0.02	4.36	1.26	1.45	0.19
Schools & Roads	231.29	317.97	0.00	0.00	0.00	--	0.00	0.00	0.00
Airport Imp: P	219.74	881.76	0.40	0.13	-0.27	-66.87	0.88	1.17	0.29
Rail Highway	185.36	155.76	0.30	0.29	-0.01	-2.63	0.55	0.45	-0.10
Wap	174.98	157.88	0.63	0.62	-0.01	-2.15	1.11	0.98	-0.13
Wat&Waste Disp	172.14	91.67	0.16	0.39	0.24	150.38	0.27	0.36	0.09
Dislocated Wor	163.40	219.25	0.41	0.14	-0.27	-66.63	0.67	0.30	-0.37
State &Com. High	162.31	102.51	0.52	0.52	0.00	-0.10	0.84	0.53	-0.31
Child Welfare	157.67	232.34	0.44	0.39	-0.05	-11.78	0.70	0.91	0.21
UMTA: Small	155.09	142.59	0.66	0.27	-0.39	-58.82	1.03	0.39	-0.64
Ed of Handi Child	144.08	149.80	0.35	0.39	0.03	9.38	0.51	0.58	0.07
Hazard Elim	143.54	163.11	0.52	0.51	-0.01	-1.30	0.74	0.83	0.09
Comm. Ser BG	130.10	388.29	0.90	0.61	-0.29	-32.42	1.17	2.36	1.19
Summer Food Child	101.98	110.14	0.66	0.63	-0.03	-4.64	0.67	0.69	0.02
Adult Ed	97.22	111.98	0.64	0.64	0.01	0.82	0.62	0.72	0.10
Ag. Exper. Stat	91.58	107.53	0.69	0.66	-0.03	-4.02	0.63	0.71	0.08
Food Dist: Elderly	85.74	129.93	0.55	0.50	-0.05	-8.74	0.47	0.65	0.18
Airport Impr:S	32.22	149.57	0.22	0.23	0.01	4.63	0.07	0.34	0.27
Total/Weighted Avg.	72,868.47	89,157.27	0.57	0.57	0.00	-0.70	415.02	504.22	89.20

Table 2

Total Awards, Rhode Island's Award, and Changes in Total Awards and the State's Portion of the 60 Largest Grant Programs: Real (1982) Dollars

Program Name	Total Funds First Year	Total Funds Last Year	State Award First Year	State Award Last Year	Change in Total Funds	Change in State Funds
	(in millions of real dollars)				(in percent)	
Medicaid	18,424.99	24,976.50	117.03	157.18	35.56	34.30
AFDC	7,355.04	8,206.80	45.87	40.16	11.58	-12.43
General Revenue	5,441.70	--	24.01	--	--	--
Const. Grants	4,063.61	1,461.72	20.28	10.10	-64.03	-50.21
Interstate Const.	3,768.10	1,878.59	43.97	10.75	-50.14	-75.55
Ed. Depr. Child	3,127.53	3,400.90	11.01	12.83	8.74	16.54
CDBG: Large	2,760.94	1,578.16	14.49	8.40	-42.84	-42.05
S.S. Block Grnt	2,396.17	2,140.77	11.52	8.62	-10.66	-25.17
School Lunch	2,432.42	2,282.52	8.49	6.08	-6.16	-28.35
JTPA II-A	1,690.59	1,360.06	7.24	3.56	-19.55	-50.89
LIHEAP	1,848.82	1,101.35	12.84	7.61	-40.43	-40.73
Primary System	1,717.60	1,814.03	8.64	9.04	5.61	4.68
UMTA: Large	1,360.80	1,142.74	8.53	7.22	-16.02	-15.33
Bridge Rep. Reh.	980.65	1,091.63	5.97	2.74	11.32	-54.17
WIC	960.22	1,399.70	6.05	6.27	45.77	3.58
Food Dist.: Child	955.21	742.15	3.06	1.93	-22.30	-37.04
CDBG: Small	933.70	656.24	4.37	2.83	-29.72	-35.09
Ed. of Hand	908.01	1,106.78	3.69	5.02	21.89	35.98
Rehab. services	883.41	1,063.54	3.85	4.24	20.39	10.18
Interstate 4R	750.78	1,964.41	3.75	9.87	161.65	162.90
JTPA IIB	823.93	553.73	4.44	1.79	-32.79	-59.67
Urban System	818.96	576.16	4.51	2.92	-29.65	-35.21
Emp. Ser. Admin	666.75	588.13	2.79	2.11	-11.79	-24.13
UnEm Ins	727.81	1,122.78	5.72	7.01	54.27	22.46
Head Start	725.65	844.91	2.73	3.07	16.43	12.26
Voc Ed	713.37	651.73	3.13	3.32	-8.64	6.16
School Assist	660.02	525.13	2.68	2.31	-20.44	-13.90
Rural Secondary	615.33	463.38	3.11	2.34	-24.69	-24.77
Improv School P	421.29	381.88	2.15	1.95	-9.35	-9.27
Alco,Drug, MH	420.18	393.20	4.00	3.63	-6.42	-9.20
Child Support Enf	416.72	630.12	1.26	2.12	51.21	67.71
Refugee Assist	385.24	238.50	1.71	1.44	-38.09	-15.74
UDAG	377.59	154.63	0.27	0.01	-59.05	-96.90
Maternal Child Healt	371.28	357.50	1.21	1.16	-3.71	-3.65
Win	368.77	75.43	2.16	0.44	-79.55	-79.86
Older Am: Nutr	362.49	340.14	1.86	1.82	-6.17	-1.98
School Break	333.96	362.92	0.74	0.68	8.67	-8.40
Foster care	327.28	608.54	0.99	2.51	85.94	155.11
Child Care Food	309.54	406.99	1.31	1.12	31.48	-14.68
Senior Com. Ser	288.25	266.65	1.55	1.41	-7.49	-8.68
Interstate Sub	246.58	421.95	7.22	40.32	71.12	458.54
Migrant Ed	271.41	212.37	0.02	0.11	-21.75	403.87
Older Am Support	260.80	216.35	1.34	1.16	-17.05	-13.42

Table 2

Total Awards, Rhode Island's Award, and Changes in Total Awards and the State's Portion of the 60 Largest Grant Programs: Real (1982) Dollars (continued)

Program Name	Total Funds First Year	Total Funds Last Year	State Award First Year	State Award Last Year	Change in Total Funds	Change in State Funds
	(in millions of real dollars)				(in percent)	
Schools & Roads	245.17	261.27	0.00	0.00	6.57	0.00
Airport Imp: P	219.74	724.54	0.88	0.96	229.72	9.25
Rail Highway	196.48	124.21	0.58	0.36	-36.78	-38.45
Wap	185.48	129.73	1.18	0.81	-30.06	-31.56
Wat&Waste Disp	182.47	75.32	0.29	0.30	-58.72	3.36
Dislocated Wor	151.72	174.84	0.62	0.24	15.24	-61.54
State &Com. High	172.05	84.23	0.89	0.44	-51.04	-51.09
Child Welfare	167.13	190.91	0.74	0.75	14.23	0.77
UMTA: Small	164.40	113.71	1.09	0.31	-30.83	-71.51
Ed of Handi Child	152.72	123.09	0.54	0.48	-19.40	-11.84
Hazard Elim	152.15	130.07	0.78	0.66	-14.51	-15.62
Comm. Ser BG	130.10	319.06	1.17	1.94	145.24	65.74
Summer Food Child	108.10	93.58	0.71	0.59	-13.43	-17.45
Adult Ed	103.05	89.30	0.66	0.57	-13.35	-12.64
Ag. Exper. Stat	97.07	88.36	0.67	0.58	-8.98	-12.64
Food Dist: Elderly	90.88	110.39	0.50	0.55	21.46	10.85
Airport Impr:S	34.15	122.90	0.07	0.28	259.85	276.52
Total/Weighted Avg.	76,226.36	72,717.24	432.91	409.00	-4.60	-5.52